

## AXBRIDGE RURAL DISTRICT COUNCIL.

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## A N N U A L      R E P O R T

of the

MEDICAL OFFICER of HEALTH for 1939.

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PUBLIC HEALTH OFFICERS.

Arthur Victor L��che,	L.R.C.P., M.R.C.S. Medical Officer of Health (Part Year).
Thomas Lamb Scott,	L.R.C.P., M.R.C.S. Medical Officer of Health.
Henry Richard Day,	Chief Sanitary Inspector. Cert. of R.S.I. & [REDACTED] for Sanitary Inspectors. Cert. of the R.S.I. for Inspectors of Meat & other Foods.
Joseph Stower,	Assistant Sanitary Inspector. Cert. of the R.S.I.
Albert Reginald Smith,	Assistant Sanitary Inspector & Housing Maintenance Officer. Cert. of the R.S.I. & S.I.E. Joint Board for Sanitary Inspectors. Cert. of the R.S.I. for Inspectors of Meat & Other Foods.
John Harry Ellis,	District Sanitary Inspector. Cert. of R.S.I. & S.I.E. Joint Board for Sanitary Inspectors. Cert. of the R.S.I. for Inspectors of Meat & Other Foods.
Alan Harwood Knape,	District Sanitary Inspector. Cert. of R.S.I. & S.I.E. Joint Board for Sanitary Inspectors. Cert. of the R.S.I. for Inspectors of Meat & Other Foods. Hon. Cert. Hygiene granted by the Royal Institute of Public Health and Hygiene. B. Sc. Economics - Part Final University of London. Cert. in Practical Sanitary Science and Building Construction (Battersea Polytechnic).

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ANNUAL REPORT

of the

MEDICAL OFFICER of HEALTH for 1939.

To the Chairman and Members  
of the Axbridge Rural District Council.

Mr. Chairman and Gentlemen:-

I have the honour to submit my first Annual Report dealing with the work carried out by your Public Health Department.

I succeeded Dr. Leche as your Medical Officer of Health on the 1st October 1939.

Following the instructions of the Ministry, the Report this Year omits many items formerly dealt with at length.

Your Chief Sanitary Inspector - Mr. H.R.Day - has collaborated with me in the production of this Report and the Report which he has formerly submitted separately is incorporated in this Report.

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Area of District (in acres) . . .	89,767
Number of inhabited houses (end of 1939)	6,875
Rateable Value . . . . .	£152,924.0.0d.
Sum represented by a penny rate	£637. 3.8d.

SOCIAL CONDITIONS, etc.

The social conditions are generally good owing to the prosperity of the main industries, quarrying, catering, building, agriculture (including fruit growing) etc. Some qualification may be made in the case of building, owing to the slump which supervened following the outbreak of War, in September, but the workers in this industry were generally absorbed by good rates of pay by war work within and without the district. Unemployment was generally less than in the previous year.

GENERAL PROVISION OF HEALTH SERVICES FOR THE AREA.

NURSING IN THE HOME.

The District Nurses are also Certified Mid-wives. There are fourteen working in the District. These Nurses are employed by the Local Voluntary Nursing Association. There are no Nurses provided for Infectious Diseases.

TREATMENT CENTRES & CLINICS.

Those at Weston-super-Mare are utilised for this District for venereal and tubercular diseases.

There are no Maternity and Child Welfare Centres, Day Nurseries, School Clinics, etc. in this District.

HOSPITALS.

There are the Axbridge Public Assistance Infirmary, and the Axbridge Joint Isolation Hospital i.e. Axbridge; Bridgwater Borough; Part Bridgwater Rural; Highbridge and Burnham-on-Sea. The Isolation Hospital provides its own Ambulance service.



## SANITARY CIRCUMSTANCES OF THE AREA.

### WATER SUPPLY.

There is a piped supply to every parish within the District. All the undertakings are owned by the District Council with the exception of the Scheme for Kewstoke, which parish is within the water supply area of Weston-super-Mare. There are no large concentrations of premises outside the area of supply but there are certain areas with scattered premises depending upon private sources of supply (usually good) and rainwater supplies. There are proposals for certain of these areas, which will be carried into effect when it is practicable to do so at anything approaching a reasonable cost.

The water was controlled by monthly bacteriological examination made at the Somerset County Laboratory. All supplies have been excellent in quality and quantity during the year. Occasionally analytical samples were submitted with a view to ascertaining the plumbosolvency of certain of the waters. In no case was lead found in the water. Certain waters had some action on lead under Laboratory conditions only.

Extensions and protection works carried out or completed during the year were as follows:-

North Marsh and Royal Air Force School, Supply. Extension to Royal Air Force School, Locking, enlargement of Filtration Plant and installation of Chlorinator.

Burrington Supply. Construction of new Intake and exclusion of over-ground waters.

Berrow and Brean Supply. Extension of Trunk Main from Bleadon in place of supply from the Burnham-on-Sea Urban District Council.

Charterhouse Supply. Installation of Chlorinator.

Blackdown Supply (originally Winscombe & Shipham Supply). Installation of Chlorination Plant.

### DRAINAGE and SEWERAGE.

The Sewerage and Sewage Disposal Works for the parish of Winscombe were completed and 134 drains of premises were connected to the system. Considerable improvement of drainage works have been carried out in the District. These have been mainly in connection with work by formal and informal action under the Housing Act 1936.

### RIVERS and STREAMS.

There were no serious sources of pollution but Sewerage Schemes and Disposal Works should be considered (following the present emergency) for the parishes of Axbridge, Congresbury, and Wedmore. Improvements are essential in the case of the Disposal Works in the parish of Wrington.

### REFUSE COLLECTION.

During the year the District Council initiated a Refuse Disposal Scheme for the whole of the North Marsh area with the parish of Bleadon, comprising 15 parishes, and an estimated population of 13,140. The collection is fortnightly by means of a 10 cu.yd. covered collecting vehicle. In addition, the Council held a Contract for a large Royal Air Force School at Locking at which collections were made three times a week. The disposal was to controlled tips.

Refuse Collection is undertaken as Agents to the District Council by the Parish Councils of Axbridge, Berrow, Cheddar, and Wedmore.

## SANITARY INSPECTION OF THE AREA.

### SUMMARY OF SANITARY WORK DONE DURING THE YEAR.

Houses and premises inspected (apart from re-inspections)	...	907
Total inspections (including re-inspections)	...	2782
Complaints investigated	...	68
Written Notices and Letters sent	...	5023
Nuisances from the keeping of animals abated	...	2
Nuisances from the accumulation of manure abated	...	1
Complaints from overcrowding dealt with	...	4
Sewers and drains - relaid or repaired	...	73
Drainage of new premises inspected and tested	...	100
Premises provided with public water supply	...	202
Rooms, Classrooms, and Domestic Offices disinfected and disinfested	...	45
Milk Samples taken	...	417
Council House General Maintenance Repairs	...	1916

### PERIODICALLY INSPECTED.

Registered Dairies, Cowsheds, and Milkshops (including wholesale dairies)	...	803
Private slaughterhouses (7 registered, 12 licensed)	...	19
Bakehouses	...	17
Factories	...	104

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### CAMPING SITES.

No. of Licensed Sites	.. 15	Approx. 400 dwellings.
No. of Unlicensed Sites	: 20	
Est. max. pop at any one time during Summer Season		3,500

Most of the sites were of large area and were situate within the parishes of Brean, Berrow, Kewstoke, and Cheddar. Besides these there were numerous cases of individual campings within the District. The powers given in Section 269 of the Public Health Act 1936 do not readily protect areas against abuses due to moveable dwellings. The exemptions, particularly of Sub-section 2, place very onerous duties of inspections upon local authorities if the question of 42 consecutive days occupation, or in cases where 60 days occupation in any twelve months, must be proved. The exemption in 5(iii) whereby moveable dwellings not occupied may be kept on premises is also building up accumulation of structures which are detracting from the amenity of this District. The Camps are generally established or the dwellings are placed for the benefit of city dwellers requiring them for holidays and who frequently trade by 'lettings' during such periods as they do not require them for their own use. The burden of control for the protection of rural areas rests upon the local authority. With the coming of working-class holidays as a compulsory measure it may be expected that moveable dwellings occupation for holidays will increase. Likewise loopholes for evading proper control by camping conditions will be more generally known and used. It is already evidenced that many persons intend to utilize moveable dwellings in rural districts during the war period instead of remaining in cities. In other words, the problem of control of moveable dwellings is an increasing one; present legislation does not provide an adequate solution and rural authorities are faced with a burden which cannot be lightened and which is likely to become unmanageable.

### SCHOOLS.

The sanitary condition of certain of the Schools leaves much to be desired. It has been found very difficult to persuade the responsible authorities of the desirability of converting from conservancy systems to water carriage systems even where good disposal can be provided. In general, conservancy systems have been found to be liable to neglect and it is becoming increasingly difficult to obtain Caretakers who will undertake satisfactory maintenance and cleansing duties.



FACTORIES ACT 1937.

There were 104 Factories within the District, and registered under the Act; four Milk Depots, an Iron Foundry, and two Fat Refining Works are included in this total. The following inspections etc. have been carried out:-

<u>Written Notices.</u>	<u>Prosecutions.</u>	<u>Inspections.</u>
8	Nil.	99

*Thomas Scott*

MEDICAL OFFICER OF HEALTH.